

Major fire in Pinar del Río destroys over 400 hectares of forest



Forest fires have devastated 400 hectares in Pinar del Río (symbolic image) (source: [Matt Howard/Unsplash](#))

[The flames raged](#) in a wooded area in the province of Pinar del Río for more than five days, until the Cuban authorities were finally able to announce the news on Saturday: the major fire in the [area around Torre Vieja](#), near the village of San Simón de las Cuchillas, has been extinguished.

As the National Directorate of the Forestry Corps of the Ministry of the Interior [reported](#), the extinguishing work within the affected area in the Municipio of San Juan y Martínez was completed at 5 p.m. on Saturday.

110 firefighters and heavy equipment in action

The fire broke out in the area on Tuesday, March 18. Since then, more than 110 forest rangers and employees of the Pinar del Río state forestry company have been fighting the flames, as Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Pereda Burón, head of the local forestry protection agency, told the Cuban news agency *ACN* by telephone on Thursday.

According to the report, an area of around 350 hectares of pine forest had already been affected by the fire on Thursday. The emergency services were working on firebreaks and trying to reduce combustible material on the northern front of the blaze. The southern area, on the other hand, was largely under control, Pereda Burón said.

The rough terrain, impassable paths and prevailing winds had made the extinguishing work more difficult, explained the head of the authorities. According to Pereda Burón, there had been a major fire in the area about five years ago, which is located around 25 kilometers from the center of San Juan y Martínez in the village of San Simón de las Cuchillas.

In addition to the forces of seven brigades from the forestry protection authority and the forestry service, two trucks, two bulldozers, a tractor, and three small trucks were also deployed.

Cause is being investigated

Now that the fire has been extinguished, the affected area will be inspected to determine the exact size of the fire area, according to the statement on Saturday. Initially, this was estimated at more than 400 hectares. Due to this size, the fire was classified as “very large”.

The responsible authorities are reportedly continuing to investigate the cause of the devastating fire. This was the first forest fire of this size this year. The 18 previously recorded fires had affected a total area of 28.6 hectares. ([Cubaheute](#))